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Consideration OF THE LORDS and COMMONS in Parliament Assembled.



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To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament Assembled.

IF we look into the World, and but view the Actions of Men, and see what violent Oppression there is of the Poor, and the eager pursuit after Riches ; we shall be apt to conclude Men are become lunatick, or infected with the gross Errors of the Sadduces of old : otherways one would think they would never dare to break through the Laws of God and Man at the rate they do ; so much the more, considering the Nation has so lately receiv'd such a signal Deliverance, and hath ever since been in imminent Peril : yet these things have made no Impression on the Minds of some Men, but only serv'd to heighten and encrease their Ambition and Covetousness, which hath been the occasion of many Evils, for which the Land mourns, as will appear by the ensuing Matter ; but it must with all due Acknowledgment be confess, that in Parliament there hath been all imaginable Care taken to prevent Frauds, and the Imbezlement of the Publick Money (but all hath not been sufficient). Yet there hath been one thing wanting, that is, the inspecting into the Actions of the Court, from whence the greatest of our Evils have sprung : Our Fore-fathers ever look'd upon them with a jealous Eye, as being sensible what Temptations they lay under, and what great Opportunities they had of enriching

themselves (especially in the time of War) to the Prejudice of the Nation, and how prone and apt they were to pursue their own Interest, notwithstanding their great Pretensions to Loyalty; and this is certainly a sore and great Evil the Nation now labours under: Therefore vain and fruitless will all Endeavours be, as long as there's so many great and various Corruptions in the Government; and we can expect nothing but Poverty and Misery to attend. There are many Instances both in *Holy Writ* and *History*, wherein God hath been pleased to make use of weak and mean Instruments for the bringing his Purposes to pass; and finding a general Silence, the sense of my Duty, and the Apprehension how fatal these things may prove to the Kingdom, is that which hath made me thus presume to address my self to this most August Assembly, from whom alone it is (under God) the Nation can expect Relief. We are happy in a good Prince, who will deny nothing that's fit for good Subjects to ask, and who will be very ready and willing to remove all Grievances, or any thing else that may obstruct the Glory of his Actions, or the happy Settlement of the Kingdom in Peace.

I am, my Lords and Gentlemen, your Honours most
humble, faithful and obedient Servant,

Robert Crosfeild.

GREAT BRITAIN's Tears.

THIS Nation hath long lain under a great and dangerous War, His Majesty's Royal Person expos'd to the greatest Hazards, and vast Sums of Money rais'd for carrying on the same; yet we have not made use of those Opportunities God hath put into our Hands of improving them to the Advantage of the Kingdom, but have all along taken quite different Measures from what our Fore-fathers have done under the like Circumstances of Affairs: which is obvious and plain to the Eye of any intelligible Man; and there's a general Complaint thereof through the Kingdom, but I find none inquisitive after the Causes from whence these Evils should arise: therefore I conceive it would highly conduce to His Majesty's and the Nation's Interest if we could discover the Fountain from whence they spring, which I shall endeavour to do, and hope my Labour will not be altogether in vain, but shall forbear all Personal Reflections, as knowing many honest and worthy Persons may be engaged, who have not been able to withstand the Current and Course of things, but been oblig'd to go with the Stream; neither press harder upon any, than what the natural Construction may be upon such and such Actions. And when the Kingdom is engaged in War, all Men well know, that the great Affairs of the Kingdom pass through the Hands of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, the Admiralty, and

and the Commissioners of the Navy ; and so long as the War's on foot, it makes those Employments (as likewise many others at Court) much more advantagious than in the times of Peace, and it must be allowed they have a very great Influence upon the Government ; so that as they are inclin'd they may be the Authors of much Good or Evil. By which it appears of what mighty Importance it is to the Happiness and Well-being of the Kingdom, to have Persons of Honour and Integrity in those Stations, to whom his Majesty commits so great a Trust : we can no ways better judg of things present, than by looking back to those which are past ; and it can be no Crime (but a Duty) in me to make some Inspection into the Publick Actions of the Nation during this War.

God, among many other Blessings, hath surrounded us with the Sea, as with a Wall, (whereby we are not expos'd to the Insults of the common Enemy and the Oppressor) and hath also given us great and numerous Shipping, more than ever our Fore-fathers could boast of, who notwithstanding perform'd great Actions, (which sounded into all Parts of the World) and by the Power thereof, for many Ages gave Law to *Europe*, and were properly and truly the Ballance thereof. Now it's highly worth the Enquiry to see whether we have followed their Footsteps, and made a right Use of that Blessing we have and do enjoy ; and upon View it will be found that we have fallen far short of their Actions, and greatly blemish'd the Glory of them ; which cannot be attributed to our Pusanimity, (for the same Native Courage remains) but to other Causes, which I shall endeavour to demonstrate, and then leave the Nation to judg.

Upon the first breaking out of this War, his Majesty by his great Prudence and Industry, had drawn most of the considerable Kingdoms and States of *Europe* into an Alliance,

Alliance, thereby to put a stop to the growing Greatness of the French King, and has to the highest degree expos'd his Royal Person to the greatest of Dangers; and by reason of this Alliance (hardly to be parallel'd) gave this Nation a mighty Opportunity of humbling that proud Monarch, who (by reason of drawing so great Armies into the Field) could not spare any great number of Troops for the Guard of his Maritime Coast; by which means it lay expos'd, and we might have done him infinite Damage, and committed great Spoil and Waste, which had not possibly been in his Power to have prevented; for where there's a commanding Fleet at Sea, and a competent Army on Board ready to make a Descent when and where they shall see fit, (and not send Men to a Slaughter-house) it could no way possibly be in the Power of the Enemy to prevent their landing, and making great Depredations, before they could draw a Strength together able to oppose them; but yet before that could be done, they might (if they saw it requisite) retire and be gone: by such like means the Enemy might have been driven to the greatest Extremity; and this hath always been the Opinion and Practice of all Ages and Nations that have been strong at Sea.

But unhappy poor *England*, during this War, has fallen from the common Notions of Men, and at that time when in the greatest Danger! and this hath not only been an Error of one Year or two, but many: Nay, have we not seen the Enemy's Fleet in the *Straits*, and their Coast left naked, (their Troops being drawn to the Siege of *Charleroy*) and we at the same time lay with a great Fleet almost all the Summer in *Torbay*, and yet made no Attempt upon their Coast? Let us but suppose we had lain under the same Circumstance: What a miserable Condition we should have been in, we may judg by what a Conster-

Consternation the Nation was in the last Summer, for fear the French Fleet should be out before ours. It's seen the *Venetians* can make a good use of their Shipping, as appears by their taking the *Morea*, *Ciclit* and *Scio*: and why not we, who are able to perform greater Actions than they are capable of? And no doubt we might and should have done it, had we not been prevented through the sor-did Covetousness of some Persons, who, to enrich themselves, have basely kept the Nation in a lingring War. This will not appear to be a hard and unjust Censure, when I have laid open what I have further to offer. The next thing therefore I shall proceed upon shall be, to en-quire how it came to pass that there were Embargo's laid upon Shipping from Year to Year for several Years to-gether, to the great Prejudice of His Majesty and the whole Kingdom. Some Men did and do conjecture that it was carried on by Interest, and to satisfy the avaritious Temper of some Persons belonging to the Admiralty, (for it brought vast Sums of Money to their Hands) and their Opinion in that matter seems to be justly grounded; for being done (as before is said) for several Years, there must have been some very urgent Cause for so doing, and none so great as the King's want of Men (as indeed no-thing else could be rendred a sufficient Cause for so violent an Action, and of so pernicious Consequence to the King and Kingdom.) The same Cause still remains, and hath been all this last Summer more pressing than ever; yet we see there has been no Embargo laid: You will then say, How comes there to be so great a Change? It was because the last Session of Parliament this Matter was ex-ploded and laid open (by me) in Print, how pernicious the laying Embargo's was to his Majesty's and the King-dom's Interest, and undeniable Reasons given to prove, that there was no manner of Cause for so doing; which

in short overthrew that Busines, and the Nation has heard no more of it since.

And there hath been Application made to the Lords of the Admiralty, wherein has been laid open what vile Corruptions were and are committed in his Majesty's Yards, in the Imbezelment of his Majesty's Stores, and the great Destruction made of Timber and Plank in the building and repairing the Royal Navy, and the irregular Proceedings in the said Yards; which hath amounted to vast Sums of Money which might have been sav'd: and the Matter has had the Approbation of almost all Persons that have seen it; but notwithstanding this has made no Impression on their Lordships, who have delay'd the Person that made the Proposal, but promis'd him from time to time to bring his Matter to an Issue, but never perform'd it. The Commissioners of the Navy (to whom it was referr'd) treated the Proposer rudely, and never would make a just Report of the Matter to them referr'd, but endeavour'd to evade and ridicule what they were not able to answer or confute. This Affair hath lain for near this two Years, and lies still undetermined, altho it be of such vast Importance to the King and Kingdom; and there are seventeen have made Oath of these things, who are no loose idle Persons, but Men living in good Repute, that have even an Horror upon them to consider that these things are practised: and those that do it are countenanced and supported in it by those who should redress them, and which might have been long since done, and may yet this Session of Parliament (if honest Men are employ'd) by appropriating such a Sum of Money to that very use, and making a borrowing Clause, by which means there would be ready Money to pay the Workmen; the want of which is alledged to be the great Cause of all these Abuses: then that Money that hath been hitherto so basely wasted and

mispent, may be employ'd towards the Payment of the Sailers, whose Case truly is very deplorable, and would even move a stony Heart to Compassion ; who are made a Prey of on every hand, I need not particularize wherein, it having been already done by others, and it's no more than what's generally known : but it's contrary to common Policy and Honesty to oppress Men to such a degree, who are of such great use to the Publick ; and no doubt their Sighs and Tears have long since pierced the Clouds, and call aloud to Heaven for Vengeance, and there's no one Sin whatever sooner brings Judgments upon a Nation, than the violent Oppression of the Poor. His Majesty hath been graciously pleased to issue out his Royal Proclamation for to encourage the Sailers to come into his Service, by giving them three Months Pay advance, which I wish may have the desired Effect : but there's little appearance of it ; for it's frequently seen, that the Sailers leave their Ships many times when they have six or nine Months Pay due to them : the Promise therefore of three Months Advance cannot be a sufficient Inducement for them to come into the Service ; the reason of it is, because they are as it were eaten up by others ; and we see that even a Dog will shun that Room in which he has been often beat : therefore it's no wonder the Sailers have so great an Aversion to the Publick Service ; and as they are Men and Rational Creatures they will always decline it as long as they are so ill treated. Therefore until the Cause be remov'd, the Effects will never cease ; but these Regulations must not be expected to come from the Admiralty or Navy-board, unless a Reform be first made among them. His Majesty of his Princely Compassion hath been pleas'd to recommend the Sailers Case to the Parliament, and many Proposals have been offer'd, whereby to encourage and enduce them to come into his Service : among others some have propos'd to register them in the several

several Ports, with such Clauses and Restrictions, as may oblige them to it : but I humbly conceive all of those Methods will be found to be defective, and not answer the End thereby intended ; for there must not be a stop put to our outward or coasting Trade : so that if a Sailer comes to enter himself on Board any of these Ships, he may take what Name he pleases upon him, or at least name a wrong Port to which he belongs, (which the Master will wink at, if he knows it, rather than want Men) and he cannot easily be confuted in either ; and Recourse must be made to the Register upon the account of every Ship that moves, which will be endless and uncertain ; and withal, it will be found to be as difficult and as unlikely to make the Sailers regular, as to tame a wild Bull : so that at last his Majesty will be oblig'd to impress Men as formerly : Therefore there must be some better Method taken than these. In short, if the Sailers be justly paid, and their Wages somewhat advanced, and better Provision made for them in case they are wounded or maim'd, then his Majesty will never want Men, tho' there be no impressing them, which I humbly cenceive may be done by these means.

That all Coasters whatever of an hundred Tun, do pay 1 s. each Voyage they shall make, and so proportionable according to the Burden of each Ship ; and all outward-bound Shipping to pay agreeable to their Burden and Voyage, according to the Proposel I made the last Session of Parliament ; this Money to be employ'd only to the Use and Benefit of such Sailers as shall be wounded or maim'd in the Publick Service, which may be collected without any Charge ; and this to continue as well in Peace as War, which would fully answer all the Ends proposed : and if it be charged upon Sailers and Bottom, (as the Parliament shall see fit) neither of them would grumble at it ; or if it be charged only upon the Sailers, there's none of them would

grudg to pay it, by reason it's so small a matter, and they know not how soon they may be in his Majesty's Service; then if they have the Misfortune to be maim'd they are sure to be provided for; the very Apprehension of which will make all Sailers extream willing to pay the Money.

And as the Affair may be order'd, it may be of good use to such of them as may happen to be wounded on Board Merchant Ships: As for Instance,

The Lame Hospitals of this Town do admit into them many sick, poor and lame Persons; but in case there happens any Action at Sea, whereby many Sailers are wounded, then those poor Persons are turn'd out, and forc'd to make room for the Sailers; yet notwithstanding it must be allow'd that the Poor receive great Relief from the said Hospitals: so by the same Rule may Sailers that are wounded or maim'd on board Merchant-men be reliev'd by this, as things may be order'd by the great Wisdom and Prudence of the Parliament; and without all doubt it would be a great Inducement to many thousands of Men to take to the Sea more than now do, and it would be greatly to the Honour and Interest of the Nation. And if after all, it shall be found his Majesty must have recourse to a Press, then no doubt a Land-Pres will be the most effectual, that is, to take up the Sailers in all the out-Ports by the Custom-house Officers (with the Assistance of the Constables, &c.) who generally know the Sailers, and not by the Pres-Ketches, which is but an absurd way, altho antient, and kept on foot only by Interest, (upon the sight of which the Sailers abscond) which the Ports look upon little better than Enemies, as being Obstructers to their Trade and Business; so upon that account they would be very willing to assist in a Land-Pres (which may be done by Letter) that so they may not be plagu'd by the Pres-Ketches. This had been long since done, only it's against the Interest
of

of the Admiralty ; therefore it can never be expected they will promote it, but (under-hand) oppose it to the uttermost of their Power ; but at the same time they forget the great Duty and Obligations they lie under : but what shall we say ? Interest is the God that some Men worship. And if once a Publick and National Interest comes to be but heartily and sincerely espoused, (and not be forc'd to truckle to the Intrigues and Designs of private Persons, as it hath done hitherto) then no doubt but this Matter will take place, because all Persons that are likely to be concern'd in the Payment of the Money will be so ready and willing to part with it.

I shall now give some short Account of a Matter I propos'd to the Right Honourable the Lords of the Treasury, for laying aside all the Receiver-Generals for the Land-Tax, as being a great and unnecessary Charge to the Government, which I shew'd to many Persons of eminent Quality, who very well approv'd on it ; yet however their Lordships would never so much as vouchsafe me a hearing : and when I petition'd his Majesty in Council that I might be heard, I was there obstructed, and my Petition not suffered to be read ; but I find it's not my case alone, for there are four or five hundred Petitions now lying at the Council-Board, which are stifled and not suffered to be read. It cannot be judg'd that the Clerks of the Council dare to act so great a piece of Impudence of themselves, but they must be supported in it by some Persons of greater Quality, which I conceive to be a Crime of the greatest Magnitude ; for thereby his Majesty is depriv'd of the true Knowledg and State of his Affairs, the Corruption and Abuses that creep into the Government, and the Oppression his Subjects lie under ; and by these means there's no possibility of Redress so long as this Bar remains, which is an Act of the greatest Injustice : but those Proceedings

ceedings are diametrically opposite to his Majesty's Goodness, and tend to nothing but Ruin: All these Evils happen and come to pass by there being a predominate Party at Court that seek themselves, and not the Nation's Good, (being Slaves to their own Lusts) and who govern Affairs as they please.

Therefore so long as they are in Power, there can be little reason to expect his Majesty's Affairs should prosper, or the Nation be successful in what shall be undertaken; for they by Interest and Policy will so clog the Wheel of Publick Affairs, that we shall even remain in the same State we were in when we first began.

I have one Matter more to offer, (in which I shall be very brief) and do declare I can make appear, that there have been two or three hundred thousand Pounds of the publick Money imbezled, and in whose Hands it now remains, (this doth no ways relate to any thing by me before publish'd) if the Parliament will be pleased but to take the same Methods that are usually taken in the like cases; and then if I do not prove what I assert, let me be punished as an Impostor and Incendiary.

I know it will be affirm'd by what I have done, that I tax his Majesty with want of Prudence and Conduct: I deny the Assertion; for the Glory of his Actions shine so bright through the whole course of his Life, that even the worst of his Enemies cannot do it; but this I presume to say, That Princes do both see and hear with other Mens Eyes and Ears: And his Majesty by reason of his long Absence, hath not had leisure to inspect into things, his time being wholly taken up in weighty Affairs; so that he hath (in great measure) been obliged to rely upon the Honour and Justice of others: therefore what Error may have been committed, or Corruptions crept into the Government, they can no ways be imputed to his Majesty.

And

And I think it's now very evident, that the Kingdom is highly opprest, and as it were fetter'd with its own Corruptions, that it cannot exert its Strength, and prosecute the War with that Vigor it might ; but yet it seems to be hush'd asleep and fallen into a deep Lethargy of Security in the midst of Danger : And our Church and Nation, which has been the Glory and Bulwark of the Protestant Religion, is like to sink under the Weight of its own Corruptions. For if we will but look and examine into the Causes of the Decay and Downfal of the great Empires and Kingdoms that have been in the World, and are now extint, we shall find their Ruin principally owing to their own Wickedness ; and what reason have we to expect God should be more merciful to us than others, to whom he has given a greater Light and Knowldg, and fav'd as it were as a Brand out of the Fire ? These Mercies we have received will only serve to heighten our Guilt, and increase our Punishment ; and it's seen by Experience we know not how to prize Mercies (as we ought) till we are depriv'd of them, as does appear in the Death of the late incomparable Princess, the Queen's most excellent M^esty, who was the Glory of her Sex, and of whom the Nation was not worthy ; and I fear her Loss to be but the Fore-runner of greater Evils.

For when there's a violent Oppression of the Poor in a Land, and great Enormities committed that have an apparent Tendency to Ruin, and that these are laid open to the view of the World, (it matters not by what Hand) and notwithstanding all this, these Evils shall continue and not be redrest; then in such a case they become National Sins, for which God certainly will visit with the Rod of his Anger. It has always been the Practice of our Fore-fathers (who have carefully transmitted down to us our Religion and Law) in Parliament, to look and inspect into the

the Actions of the Court (even in the times of Peace) to correct and punish such Ministers they found to be corrupt or deficient in their Duty, of which we have almost infinite Examples, and yet at the same time it was never thought in the least to be a Diminution to the Honour of their Prince.

Therefore how much does it behove the Nation to rouze it self, and consider the Peril it now lies under? Are our Religion, Laws and Liberties valuable? then let us shew a Courage and Resolution answerable to the Danger we are in; and, in the Name of God, take such Measures as tend to their Preservation, by rooting out those Corruptions that are in the Government. Then may we have some hope and prospect of a Blessing; ~~ways~~ I fear the time will come, that we shall call ~~and~~ cry unto the Almighty for Help when he will not hear us. ~~not~~ denounce that heavy Judgment upon us he did ~~to~~ the Jews by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as may be seen in the 2nd Chapter and the 13th and 14th Verses.

In thy Filthiness is Lewdness : because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy Filthiness any more, till I have caused my Fury to be upon thee.

I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to pass, when I do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent: according to thy Way, and according to thy Doings they judge thee, saith the Lord God.

F I N I S.

